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ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON ITS TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION

Draft report

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Chapter V. FOLLOW-UP TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION, 1984

1. The Population Commission considered item 6 of its agenda at its 448th and 449th meetings, on 1 March 1991. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Concise report of the Secretary-General on the monitoring of world population trends and policies, with special emphasis on age structure (E/CN.9/1991/2);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on interrelationships between population and environment in rural areas of developing countries (E/CN.9/1991/6);

(c) Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations system in the field of population (E/CN.9/1991/7);

(d) Report of the Secretary-General on the monitoring of multilateral population assistance (E/CN.9/1991/8);

(e) Report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on the activities of the Fund (E/CN.9/1991/9);

(f) Report of the Secretary-General on the work of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the World Population Plan of Action (E/CN.9/1991/10);

(g) The parts of the reports, including the decisions, of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme on its thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh sessions (E/1989/32 and E/1990/29) dealing with the United Nations Population Fund.

A. Activities of the United Nations Population Fund

2. The representative of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) introduced the report of the Executive Director of the Fund on the Fund's activities. The Fund had conducted a review and assessment of the world's accumulated population experience in the past two decades and had convened the International Forum on Population in the twenty-first century. The Amsterdam Declaration, which emanated from the Forum, clarified key issues in the field of population, collectively set targets for the foreseeable future and estimated resource needs. The Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme took note of the unmet needs for population activities and urged all Governments, concerned international and regional organizations, financial institutions and non-governmental organizations to make every effort to reach the target of $9 billion by the year 2000. The report also highlighted the efforts of the Fund to mobilize resources for population matters, as reflected in General Assembly resolution 45/216 urging follow-up of the goals of the Amsterdam Declaration.

3. Within UNFPA, the period under review saw the introduction of Programme Review and Strategy Development exercises in selected countries. This operational innovation gave emphasis to substantive analysis of country conditions and strategic programming. It had been designed to assist Governments to develop and strengthen a national population programme and strategy, to become more self-reliant in formulation and implementation of population policies and to assist the Government, UNFPA and other donors in delineating programmes for population assistance. Other UNFPA activities involved intensification of the Fund's evaluation activities and the development of a comprehensive management information system.

4. The financial position of UNFPA had improved in recent years, with total income surpassing $363 million in 1988-1989 and being projected to $445 million for 1990-1991. Total expenditures were $203.5 million in 1989, with about $157.4 million for programme expenditures. The total number of authorized budget posts in UNFPA was 696 in 1990, comprising 169 Professional and 527 General Service staff. The proportion of women on the Professional staff exceeded 39.5 per cent.

5. The programme of work of UNFPA continued to emphasize family planning, which took up 46.3 per cent of total allocations in 1989. Information, education and communication activities received 16.8 per cent; basic data collection, 10.9 per cent; population dynamics, 12.5 per cent; and women, population and development, 3.1 per cent. UNFPA resources for programmes in women, population and development totalled $5.9 million in 1989, up from $1.9 million in 1988. Other special areas of UNFPA activity were youth, population, the aging, HIV/AIDS prevention and population and environment interrelationships.

B. Monitoring of multilateral population assistance

6. Complementing the report of the Executive Director of UNFPA was the report of the Secretary-General on the monitoring of multilateral population assistance (E/CN.9/1991/8), which covered the period 1988-1989. It was stated in the report that total international assistance for population in 1989 amounted to $740.8 million. The share of the United Nations system in that amount was $194.9 million or about 32 per cent. Bilateral assistance made up $381.2 million or 62 per cent and private assistance and assistance from non-governmental organizations totalled $39.3 million or 6 per cent. Those figures did not include World Bank credits, which amounted to about $125.4 million.

7. Within the United Nations system, UNFPA accounted for 75.2 per cent of funds for population activities in 1989. Among the 15 United Nations organizations engaged in population work, the total funds allocated by UNFPA to their activities amounted to 59.1 per cent of their combined budgets. Geographically, assistance to activities in Africa had been steadily increasing since 1986; the proportion of UNFPA programme funds to that region had risen from 26.4 per cent to 29.6 per cent. Support for activities in Asia and the Pacific had declined from 51.7 per cent in 1986 to 43.2 per cent in 1989. Latin America and the Caribbean had also received an increasing proportion of funds (from 10.2 per cent to 15.7 per cent). The Middle East and Mediterranean region had steadily received about 11 per cent of UNFPA resources.

8. In terms of substantive areas, UNFPA had spent the bulk of its funds in 1989 (about 44.9 per cent) for family planning activities. In pursuance of the goals set in the Amsterdam Declaration (to increase contraceptive prevalence in developing countries from 51 per cent to 56 per cent; reduce infant mortality rates to at least below 50 per 1,000 live births; and to reduce maternal mortality by at least 50 per cent), the Fund encouraged official policies designed to achieve the goals for maternal and child health and family planning (MCH/FP), encouraged legislation, for instance to raise the age of marriage, provided incentives to contraceptive production and funded information, education and communication programmes.

9. In 1989-1990, UNFPA allocations to basic data collection and analysis had increased, especially in Asia, where the 1990 rounds of censuses had started. Considerable support was also given to improvement of vital registration systems, encouragement of survey capabilities and updating of population databases. In the field of population dynamics, about 133 institution-building, training and research operations were supported by UNFPA. Another 107 operations were funded in countries seeking to formulate or adopt population policies. The spread and dissemination of those policies and programmes were stressed in information, education and communication activities, which received considerable UNFPA assistance.

10. An important trend that had begun during the period under review was the increasing amount of funds earmarked for changing the preconditions leading to reduced fertility rather than direct investments in primarily fertility control activities. In the late 1980s, multilateral assistance agencies had started allocating further funds to programmes improving the literacy of women, education

of girls, income-generating projects for women and efforts to enhance the greater participation of women in activities that affected their lives. A trend towards increased social investment - in health, social welfare and other sectors - was also observed. At the same time, support for programmes seeking to improve the condition of youth, the aged, and under-served and underprivileged groups had been increasing. All those efforts seemed to suggest that fertility decline was amenable to change, not through direct family planning interventions alone but to more integrated solutions that directly linked population with developmental processes.

C. Activities of the United Nations system in the field of population

1. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

11. The representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) informed the Commission that FAO was expanding its activities related to population matters.

12. High priority had been given to efforts to assist Governments in incorporating demographic variables into agricultural and rural development planning. A major activity in that area was the work of the FAO Policy Division in the application of Computer Assisted Population Planning in Agriculture (CAPPA), a software package designed to assist and train agricultural planners.

13. The Commission was informed that FAO was attaching great importance to supporting national population and rural development policies, mainly by incorporating population information, education and communication components into regular programme activities.

14. Action-oriented research had been undertaken to improve the capacity of FAO to provide policy-related advice to countries in population and rural development matters. Research on relationships between population and the environment in the context of sustainable agricultural and rural development had been given high priority.

2. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

15. The representative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) informed the Commission that population issues were commanding increasing priority in the work programmes of the organization. Thus, in the years to come, UNESCO would make use of its mandate, accumulated knowledge and expertise to (a) make an active contribution to the analysis of population issues and to the identification of the policy consequences of such analysis; (b) provide technical assistance to Governments in their efforts to gain access to information on population issues and use it in the formulation of development policies; and (c) contribute to the diffusion of knowledge on population issues so that individuals, couples and social groups might use it in their efforts to overcome poverty and improve their well-being.

16. UNESCO was in the process of organizing the International Congress on Population, Education and Development, to be held in 1992. The Congress, organized in collaboration with UNFPA, would prepare both a World Strategy and a Framework for Action in the Field of Population Education for the beginning of the twenty-first century, which would be submitted to the UNESCO General Conference at its twenty-seventh session, to be held in 1993. Those documents would be submitted by UNESCO and UNFPA to the 1994 international meeting on population. Their role in raising awareness of the contribution of education to the fields of population and development was stressed.

3. World Health Organization

17. The representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) noted that WHO had developed a broad concept of reproductive health including social, cultural, economic, technological and environment aspects. Increased emphasis was laid on safe motherhood, care of the newborn, women's health and development, adolescent health, development of family planning technology and improving the quality of maternal and family planning services. In the area of newborn care, WHO had initiated the development of appropriate technologies to treat and prevent complications.

18. Through the safe motherhood programme, WHO had supported a large number of epidemiological studies of maternal mortality and morbidity as well as operational research to promote safe motherhood.

19. In the area of adolescent health, WHO supported many studies to collect data on the sexual behaviour of young people, sexually transmitted diseases, fertility, age-specific abortion rates and maternal mortality. Young people had participated in those studies and in the development of strategies and action to solve problems and meet needs. Methods had been developed and applied for systematic intergovernmental planning.

20. In view of increasing concern about population growth, the Executive Board of WHO had adopted a resolution in 1989 to strengthen and promote family planning in primary health care.

21. Recently WHO had enlarged its Steering Committee on Women, Health and Development to include all WHO programme areas. That new development would further strengthen the variety of activities intended to strengthen women's leadership in health development.

D. Work of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the World Population Plan of Action

22. The report of the Secretary-General on the work of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the World Population Plan of Action (E/CN.9/1991/10) contained a review of activities carried out by nine intergovernmental and 83 non-governmental organizations.

23. The representative of the Population Council reported that the Council had ongoing operations in three areas: (a) biomedical research in the field of human reproduction to develop and improve contraceptive methods; (b) social and health science research into the causes of population change, its societal implications and appropriate policy responses; and (c) the provision of technical assistance to family planning and other population-related programmes in the developing world. In the area of research on human reproduction, 1990 had seen the approval by the Food and Drug Administration of the United States of America of the use of the new contraceptive NORPLANT among American women. The Council had performed a unique role in taking that product from the research and development stages to its introduction as an approved method of contraception. Mention was made of a study on the demographic impact of family planning programmes, in which it was concluded that the world population in 1990 would have been 412 million larger had there been no family planning programmes. Lastly, the Council's long-standing concern for the status of women was stressed.

24. The representative of Population Communications - International stressed the importance of the partnership between the community of non-governmental organizations, national Governments and the United Nations. The monthly publication of that organization, International Dateline, had contributed to that partnership by providing timely information on the activities on non-governmental organizations world wide.

25. The representative of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) noted that the Federation encompassed voluntary organizations in 134 countries, all devoted to ensuring that individuals and couples had the knowledge and means to determine the number and spacing of their children. Thus, the 1991-1993 Three-Year Plan of the Federation had established as priorities advocating family planning as a basic human right, promoting or improving the delivery of family planning services, improving the status of women, providing information and family planning services to young people, increasing the knowledge and practice of contraception among men, and developing the human resources necessary to provide adequate family planning services. In carrying out those activities, IPPF had co-operated with both UNFPA and WHO. Given its flexibility and adaptability, the Federation had been able to provide the necessary support to newly created family planning associations in Eastern European countries.

26. The representative of Turkey referred to the activities undertaken by the Turkish Family Health and Planning Foundation to improve maternal and child health in Turkey. With the support of the Foundation, 28 health and family planning clinics had been opened in different areas of the country. The Foundation was also involved in training necessary personnel and in raising awareness about population issues among both policy makers and the general public. A family planning campaign carried out in 1990 was reported to have been successful. Another one was planned for 1991.

27. The representative of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) noted the close collaboration that had traditionally existed between the Union and the Population Division of the Secretariat. With regard to the current activities of the Union, scientific committees or working groups were

reported to be active in such fields as the comparative analysis of fertility; adult mortality; population and health; economic demography; historical demography; anthropological demography; population and the environment; the status of women and population dynamics; and the use of microcomputers in the analysis of incomplete or deficient data. It was reported that three major conferences would be organized by the Union during the period 1990-1993: the European Conference (October 1991), the Conference on the Peopling of the Americas (May 1992) and the XXII General Conference of the Union (1993). The Union's publication programme continued to expand. Conference proceedings had been published, as had the IUSSP Newsletter/Bulletin de Liaison and a reprint series. The Union's collaboration with Oxford University Press had led to the publication of an international series in demography dealing with the latest scientific advances in the field and a new series aimed at a wider audience would begin soon. Lastly, the Union continued to support the expansion of research capabilities in developing countries, particularly in Africa, through a series of seminars and other training activities.

28. The representative of the Committee for International Co-operation in National Research in Demography (CICRED) informed the Commission that seven research projects were at various stages of implementation and two were planned to start soon. Among the former, two dealt with different aspects of international migration (its impact on third world development and on receiving countries, respectively), another focused on the social differentials of mortality in developed countries, a fourth dealt with the economic and social aspects of population aging, a fifth related to the integration of population in development planning, a sixth focused on urbanization and population distribution and the last dealt with the effects of family planning on demographic trends. Projects on population and the environment and on the effects of social organizations on the evolution of mortality were about to start. In addition to promoting those research activities, CICRED continued to coordinate the research carried out by some 350 centres world wide. In that connection, a regional inquiry on the research capabilities of the different centres was being undertaken. The inquiry would also try to ascertain the degree to which research findings were being used to inform policy makers. Lastly, CICRED continued to publish the Review of Reviews and had embarked on producing the third edition of POPIN Thesaurus: Population Multilingual Thesaurus.

E. Population and the environment

29. At its twenty-fifth session, the Population Commission had requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on population and the environment. The report of the Secretary-General prepared in response to that request (E/CN.9/1991/6) provided an overview of recent research findings on the impact of rapid population growth on the state of the environment in the rural areas of selected developing countries. Rural areas were selected for study because it was recognized that a majority of the population of developing countries resided in those areas and that in rural areas, the impact of population variables on the environment might be more direct.

30. The Commission was informed that, thus far, desertification and soil erosion had not had such an adverse effect on food production that world-wide average food consumption had dropped. But the population of certain regions had suffered profoundly from malnutrition owing to degradation of soils. In developing countries critical ecological zones could be found, among other places, along the margins of tropical rainforests, along the edges of deserts and in long-settled, densely populated regions. The interaction of demographic and environmental dynamics, which was one of the factors determining the pace of environmental degradation in those zones, was described in the report.